

## THE SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

**VR<sup>3</sup> Ready...Reliable...Results**

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## "It's like winning the lottery twice"



(l to r) Sherry Slaughter, former SCVRD client, and Warren Helm of the Boeing Company, and Cathy Clower and Shannon Reed of SCVRD.

After Sherry Slaughter made a "necessary move" to Charleston, South Carolina in December, 2010 to be near family, finding a job was critical.

"I arrived and put all my effort into job search, applying for hundreds of jobs and landing few interviews," she remembers.

Five months later Sherry met Shannon Reed, Area Client Services Manager at SCVRD. "Shannon became my champion," she says. "She and her team put me through several levels of interview [training], honing my skills and increasing my confidence."

The VR team recognized that Sherry had talent and motivation and would be an asset to any organization.

"Sherry had such a positive attitude and a willingness to accept feedback, I felt sure we would find her an opportunity," explains Reed. "We just had to find the right one."

Sherry was thrilled. "I could not have asked for a more competent and encouraging team and I'm humbled at the faith they had in my ability to succeed."

Her greatest desire is to use her talents and skills to add value to a worthy company. "I feel a great responsibility to be an ambassador in showing that people with disabilities have much to offer," she explains.

"I was really impressed by her professionalism," recalls Cathy Clower, VR Business Development Specialist. Clower knows that understanding the needs of both the VR client and the business are important for success. "I had been working with the Boeing Company and felt Sherry would be an ideal candidate."

"I was offered, and accepted, the job of Administrative Assistant to the Boeing South Carolina Site Training Leader, Warren Helm," says an excited Sherry.

"This experience has been like winning the lottery twice," she continues, "once in getting to work for one of the world's premiere companies and once in getting to partner with the best leader/manager of my career."

While starting a new career is exciting, it can also be very stressful.

"The Boeing Company can be a little intimidating at first due to our size," explains Helm. "But from day one, Sherry jumped right in and applied her previous knowledge, skills and abilities, and in a relatively short time, was contributing at a very high level."

"Transitioning off disability [benefits] has been challenging and rewarding," adds Sherry. "Boeing and Mr. Helm have given me all the support I need to be successful, with development opportunities and a bright career path."

Because her VR team took the time to get to know Sherry, they had immense confidence in her skills and her ability to succeed.

"The experts at SCVRD were excellent to work with," affirms Helm. "They provided me with an outstanding candidate that met all my requirements. Beyond the technical skills and abilities, we look for exceptional people that possess and value integrity, people working together, good corporate citizenship and leadership."

Helm sums up, "Sherry possesses all of these attributes and represents the true values of our company."

Sherry's career at the Boeing Company is taking off. After exceeding expectations in her first year she was recently promoted to Staff Analyst.

"It's a home run for us," is how Helm describes his experience with VR. "Hiring the best people is never an easy job so I really appreciate how the staff at Vocational Rehabilitation provided me with an outstanding employee in Sherry—I could not be happier."

This enthusiasm is expressed by Sherry. "I look forward to being a valuable member of the Boeing team for the next twenty years and paying them back many times over for investing their trust in me. SCVRD and Boeing have given me purpose and independence, two of life's greatest gifts!"

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## Samuels leaves legacy of devotion

The SCVRD agency board lost a beloved longstanding member when Mrs. Alease G. Samuels passed away on November 21, 2012.

Mrs. Samuels was appointed to the board in 1990 following her retirement after 44 years as a teacher, guidance counselor, librarian, assistant principal and principal with the Colleton County School District. She was devoted to children and to education and even in retirement worked as a substitute teacher. She was very active in her church and in the Walterboro community throughout her life and was a strong advocate for people with disabilities.



"Mrs. Samuels had a strong and highly respected presence on our board," said Commissioner Barbara Hollis. "She was a dear person with a great sense of humor and was very supportive of the agency, but never shied away from giving her opinion when it came to ensuring that the agency provided excellent services to people with disabilities. She will be greatly missed."

Mrs. Samuels was very devoted to her family and her survivors include her son Joseph, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Her legacy will continue to touch the lives of others for generations.

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## Around the state





## SCVRA meets January 27-28

In less than a month the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Association will reconvene for the first time since 2009! The association is busily preparing to host a meeting on January 27-28 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Columbia.

The theme is *VR Works for South Carolina—The Roadmap for Results*.

The event will be shorter than previous annual meetings, but packed with many great activities for SCVRA members! On Sunday evening (the 27th) divisional meetings will be held, followed by a business meeting which includes presentation of the divisional awards. A reception will follow at the hotel.

Monday morning's general session kick things off with keynote speaker Carl Wells, and will be followed by two rounds of concurrent sessions which will be very educational in scope, providing useful resources for VR service program and DDS staff. Topics include leadership, school-to-work transition, intellectual disabilities, services to veterans, community resources, and work opportunity tax credits for businesses.

Monday's awards luncheon honors the Client Achievement Award winning client and staff, Business Partner Award winners, Legislator of the Year, and other honorees.

Exhibitors will be on hand to discuss and demonstrate their products and services to attendees.

An off-site event will be offered after Sunday's reception for those who are interested—*bowling*, which will be at the lanes across the street and should be very entertaining, even for those who come just to watch!

[SCVRA membership](#) is required to attend. Membership is open to SCVRD employees and retirees as well as anyone who has an interest in SCVRD and the employment of people with disabilities. SCVRA has more than 200 members and the number is growing, so a strong turnout is anticipated for the meeting.

**Meeting Registration ends January 9.**

**[Join SCVRA](#) and keep up to date with [meeting information](#).**

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## Columbia DDS Adopt-A-Family Program

This year the Columbia DDS adopted three needy families from the Palmetto Health Children's Hospital Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders. With funds raised from events and contributions by the State Claims Office, the Columbia DDS purchased gift items and grocery gift cards for each family.

The success of this program each year is due to the commitment, dedication, and generosity of the Columbia DDS and State Claims staff.

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## SCVRD staff support PAALS

Palmetto Animal Assisted Life Services (PAALS) trains service dogs for children and adults with physical disabilities. South Carolina DDS, together with the VR State Office and the Office of State Claims, sponsored a fund raiser and raised \$1,300 for this worthwhile cause.

Service dogs assist a person with physical challenges to gain greater independence by, among other things, picking up dropped items, opening doors, turning on lights, or retrieving a phone.

Minimum service dog training standards established by Assistance Dogs International is 120 hours over 6 months. Young puppies mature enough to make a good service dog take two years to train.

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## Did you know...

...that employers can receive a tax credit of up to \$2,400 for hiring VR clients if certain qualifications are met?

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is available for hiring people with disabilities and those from other target groups.

Get [more information](#), or contact the state WOTC coordinator, [Laura Rushton](#).

**Work  
Opportunity  
Tax  
Credit**

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## Events

### Anderson/Oconee-Pickens

- January 7 - **Job Fair & Training Expo** at Tri-County Technical College Industrial & Business Development Center, Pendleton, SC 29670. For more information call 864-646-1700.
- March 21 - **Job Fair – SC Works Worklink** at Tri-County Technical College Student Center.

*For more information, call 864-224-6391 or 866-313-0082*

### Laurens

- January 23 - **Hosting the Society of Human Resource meeting** (includes staffing agencies and human resource managers from the Laurens/Clinton Area). The topic will be identifying disabilities and keeping employees working. 25-30 businesses are expected to be represented.

*For more information, call 866-443-0103*

### Beaufort

- January 8 - **Job Fair**. Participating businesses include Lowe's, Wal-Mart, Kmart, Home Depot, Golden Corral and McDonalds.

*For more information, call 843-522-1010*

### Conway

**January**

- January 16, 9-12pm - **Hiring Our Heroes**, a job fair for veteran job seekers, active duty military members, guard and reserve members, and military spouses at the Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center, 2102 N Oak St. Get more information about [Hiring Our Heroes](#)  
*For more information, call 843-248-2235*

**SCVRA Annual Meeting**

- January 27-28 - **VR Works for South Carolina—The Roadmap for Results** at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 2100 Bush River Road Columbia, SC 29210  
Get [more information about SCVRA](#)

**Enabling eligible South Carolinians with disabilities to prepare for, achieve and maintain competitive employment**

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